



by Sir Richard FitzHerbert

## Everything is better in purple

My travels around the County take in many sights and scenes, such as the many wonderful views from the A515 road to Buxton, the splendour of the parkland at Chatsworth, the stunning walk that is Dovedale and the hedges and grazing fields of the farmland south of Ashbourne... but it was this view that made me stop the car and take a photograph. The silage bags on the side of the road at Ambergate made me smile. Often one passes stacks of black, white and even pink bags of silage neatly piled by careful farmers, but these took the



biscuit! They are on the road between Ambergate and the A38 roundabout but hurry if you want to see them, they could have been fed to the cattle by now!

### Good things come in small villages

Our appearance in one of the heats of the Channel 4 afternoon TV programme 'Village of the Year' caused a great deal of consternation amongst the villagers. The objective of the show hosted by Penelope Keith was to find the best village in the country using specific criteria. We were one of four featured in a 'Central' round of heats and were up against Houghton & Wyton from Cambridgeshire, Bretforton from Worcestershire and Northern Ireland's Armoyle. All four contestants were highlighted for their various community projects and activities including a thriving Alpaca farm and ageless ballet teacher in

Cambridgeshire, a tub-thumping Silver Band at the Village Feast in Worcestershire and a speed-seeking motorbike racing weekend in Northern Ireland. The piece on Tissington featured our well-dressings, candle-making and Pat from Herbert's tearooms extolling the values of the village activity based around St Mary's Church. Sadly we were not chosen to go through (Armoyle were winners) and it was deemed a valiant effort. However, it should be noted that the three other villages had an average population of 1,568 whereas we are a tiny community of only 159. We were certainly fighting above our weight.

### SOME THINGS NEVER CHANGE

It is always fascinating to receive some Tissington memorabilia in the post. In early February I received a package of old Well Dressing photographs that I established were taken at the celebrations of 1953. The attention paid to the tasks of petalling and creating the dressings then were as painstaking and meticulous as they are today and the intense expressions on the faces of the well-dressers is a sight well known to us today. The only difference was that in 1953



Tissington well dressing in 1953

all the ladies present at the blessings wore bonnets and hats. A sign of the times?

### IN MEMORY

Another stalwart of the village has left us. Vera Hickmott, the widow of the late Ted (whom I featured in this magazine in 2008) passed away in January. Born a Shropshire lass Vera moved to Derbyshire and met Ted at a dance at The Dog & Partridge in Thorpe. Vera was the mother of three children David, Karen and Edward and the Vicar addressed the congregation saying that in the 1960s Vera would push young Edward in his pram all the way to Ashbourne to go shopping and return in the afternoon by train to Tissington! A skilled knitter and a fervent member of the Womens' Institute - she loved the coach trips to places such as Blenheim Palace and the Spode Factory in Stoke - Vera was the first member of staff to hand in their resignation to me! After working at the Hall for both my Great Uncle Sir William and my Uncle Sir John she probably felt that a third generation was pushing it! May she rest in peace.

### RAISE YOUR GAME

The annual dinner of the Derbyshire branch of the Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust to celebrate the end of the sporting shooting season took place at Hassop Hall at the beginning of February. It is a chance to meet up with all the county's shooting fraternity as well as raising funds for the charity that researches into Game Conservation and the general well-being of our national game birds. The event's fund-raising auction included lots as diverse as tickets for an England v New Zealand rugby international, 'A Day in the Life of a Butcher' and a 'Haddon McNab', and was ably and amusingly compered by Steve Salloway. It raised over £18,000 for the cause. I will be back next year.